

Brutal Patterns in “United States Governance”

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Region: [USA](#)
Theme: [History](#)

It is not difficult to find repeating patterns in United States governance internationally and domestically. Here are just a few:

- Make decisions for other people, despite the lack of knowledge about them, or any lack of responsibility for making such decisions.
- Never try diplomacy, when war will do.
- Assure that all legislation benefits the rich white males.
- Support pro-US “self-determination” around the world, unless people have the temerity to select a leader or form of government the U.S. views as unacceptable.

We will take a few moments to look at some examples of each. These are only a random sample; it would take volumes of books to adequately cover these topics.

- Making decisions the U.S. government has no business making:

No one should be surprised that groups composed of mainly men are passing abortion restrictions. People have wide and diverse views on abortion, to which they are all entitled. But there does seem to be something a bit odd about men having the final say. Shouldn't women, the people who actually get pregnant, have a significant voice in abortion legislation?

But no, the paternalistic men who control Congress and most State Houses know best, even though what they say often makes no sense. Consider U.S. president Donald Trump proclaiming at a rally that women give birth, the baby is carefully wrapped in a blanket, while the child's mother and her doctor determine whether or not to execute the baby. Fodder indeed for his rabid, right-wing, pseudo-Christian base, but without any connection to reality at all.

Let us look at a parallel situation, where decisions are made for people who have no input into them. The U.S. president is now ready, it seems, to reveal his ‘Deal of the Century’, to ‘resolve’ the main problem in the Middle East: Israel's brutal and illegal occupation of Palestine. His arrogant and unqualified son-in-law and close advisor, Jared Kushner, has conferred closely with Israel's leaders in developing the plan, but no one from the U.S. has bothered to solicit input from anyone in Palestine. But no matter: like men regulating women's bodies, the mighty U.S. knows what's best for Palestine. No wonder every Middle East expert has already declared the as-yet unannounced ‘Deal’ dead on arrival.

- Never try diplomacy, when war will do.

Trump's closest advisors are itching to invade Iran, something that even the bellicose

president himself does not seem anxious to do. Could not diplomacy perhaps serve a role here? Trump expects his illegal and unjust sanctions to cause the Iranian government to come crawling to him (when pigs fly). Would not, perhaps, some positive gesture by the U.S. help things along? Iran has adhered strictly to the JCPOA (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action), which the U.S. violated. Would it not be possible that, should the U.S. decide to honor that agreement, as Trump's predecessor, Barack Obama, did, the U.S. could then approach the Iranian government and say that there are, perhaps, one or two additional points it would like to negotiate?

Prior to the start of the Mexican-American War (1846-1848), it was said of President James Polk that he "held the niceties of diplomacy in contempt". Could not the same be said about every U.S. president before and since? The concept of 'gunboat diplomacy' (a contradiction in terms if ever there was one), is the U.S. government's idea of 'diplomacy'. Putting the words 'gunboat' and 'diplomacy' together is as ridiculous as linking 'democracy' and 'Israel'. The pairing of those words simply makes no sense.

- Assure that all legislation benefits rich, white males.

Former Speaker of the House Paul Ryan, following the 'landmark' overhaul of the U.S. tax code, found himself ridiculed from coast to coast when he remarked that a teacher had told him that, with her new tax rate, she could now afford the \$78.00 Costco membership (the teacher saw her take-home pay increase by \$1.50 per week; the top 1% of wage earners received about 650 times that amount). That Ryan actually felt that that \$1.50 weekly increase was something to crow about only shows how out of touch he was with the average U.S. citizen. And he is certainly not an anomaly. The tax law mainly benefits wealthy U.S. citizens who are overwhelmingly male and white.

- Dubious support for self-determination.

How many nations' governments has the U.S. decided to overthrow because those countries elected socialist governments, or a form of government that in some way displeased the U.S.? In each of the cases listed below, the people of each of those countries established a government of their own choosing. The U.S., either covertly through supporting terrorists, or overtly by bombing and invading the country, and/or the use of sanctions (or some combination of all of these), destroyed the government, thus thwarting self-determination. We will just look from 1950 to the present:

- Albania
- Palestine
- Laos
- Ghana
- Indonesia
- Democratic Republic of Congo
- Brazil
- Chile
- Uruguay
- Cambodia
- Argentina
- El Salvador
- Nicaragua

- Yugoslavia
- Columbia
- Venezuela
- Syria
- Libya
- Yemen
- Iran
- Iraq
- Afghanistan
- Vietnam
- Lebanon
- Grenada
- Panama

The people of these countries selected governments that were in some way displeasing to the United States, and so, instead of their duly-elected leaders, the U.S. installed brutal dictators. So much for self-determination.

This is a long-established pattern. In 1918, President **Woodrow Wilson** addressed a joint session of Congress, and said, in part, the following: “The [Turkish](#) portion of the present [Ottoman Empire](#) should be assured a secure sovereignty, but the other nationalities which are now under Turkish rule should be assured an undoubted security of life and an absolutely unmolested opportunity of autonomous development, and the [Dardanelles](#) should be permanently opened as a free passage to the ships and commerce of all nations under international guarantees.”[1] The following year, his legal counselor, David Hunter Miller, advised the president that “the rule of self-determination would prevent the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine.”[2] No, self-determination is only for those on whom the U.S. deigns to grant it.

President Donald Trump entered the White House with a promise to ‘Make America Great Again’. Where is this mythical greatness? A nation founded on genocide, built on slavery, and made powerful through brutal colonialism cannot return to a greatness it never had.

At this point, the best that can be hoped for is that, as other nations grow in military and economic power, the power and influence of the United States will decline. That will be advantageous for the entire planet.

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Notes

[1] Michael S. Neiberg, *The World War I Reader*, (New York University Press, 2006),292.

[2] Ibid.

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